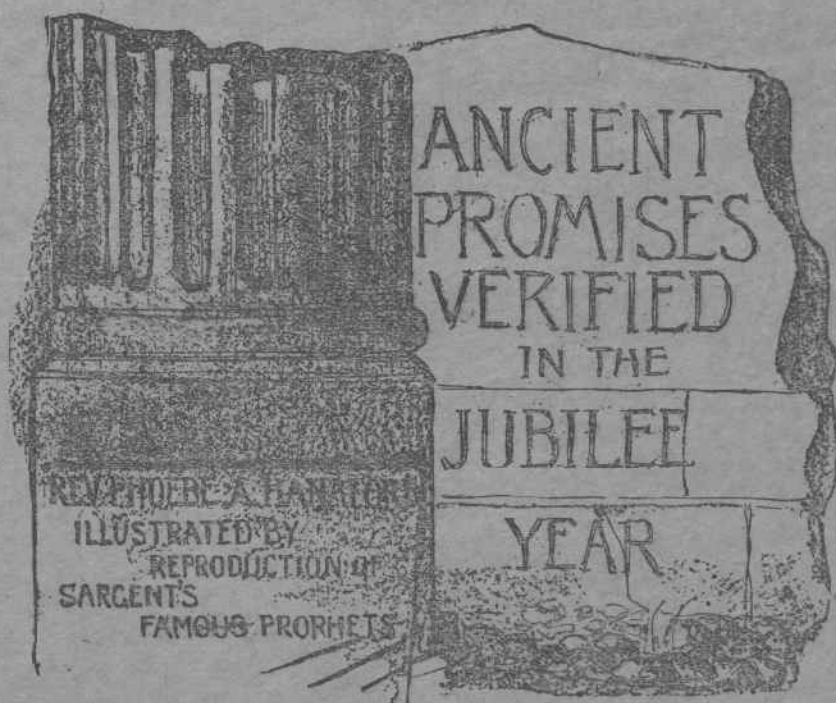


GREAT PROPHETS WHOSE WORDS



WITHOUT any reference to these closing years of the nineteenth century as being the "last days"—in which the prophecies supposed to herald the millennium are being fulfilled—there is much which can be declared as fulfillment of Hebrew prophecy while the world waxes older and the generations come and go.

The first emphatic statement to be made is this, that whatever in the long centuries has occurred as the fulfillment of prophecy, beneficial or otherwise, to nations or races, may be assumed as relating to woman as much as to man, since women and girls are the other half of a people whose prominent half may be men and boys. Victory after battle meant rejoicing among the mothers and wives, sisters and daughters, while defeat meant distress and terror and suffering of many sorts, to the women even more than to the men. The fortunes of war are those which know no sex.

Let us look at the prophets and prophecies of the olden time for a brief season. Go back to Moses. We are so apt to think of him as a leader of Israel out of bondage that we too often forget that he was a prophet also. Far away from the city where he was the pet of the Egyptian princess, and in the seclusion and simplicity of a shepherd life, Moses received the prophetic gift. First and greatest of the prophets of the Old Testament, he saw the Divine Presence in the flaming acacia tree, and heard the Divine Voice amid the stormy grandeur of Mount Sinai. When he spoke it was to the Jews as men and women. He referred to their wives and their children; he had in mind the glory that should come to the obedient. Prophecy of a kind whose fulfillment depends upon moral obedience reaches beyond the age and the people to whom it is addressed, and therefore the swan-song of Moses—in so far as it was prophecy—has been fulfilled, and is being fulfilled in the years of the Christian era, therefore also in the Victorian age. Wherever good and evil have been set before any, and the choice has been of the good, there, in that place, at that time and by that people, male and female, has been realized the fulfillment of the optimistic word.

Joshua was the revered leader of Israel into the Promised Land, which

Moses only beheld from the summit of Pisgah, and when in the great captain's serene old age—after peace had been conquered and the nation had come to enjoy a rest from war—he addressed the people, Joshua also followed in the wake of the prophecies of Moses, predicting good to those who obeyed the divine law. Wherever during Victoria's long reign the law of righteousness has prevailed in her dominions, prophetic intimations have become facts of history, and the men and women of Great Britain have alike been blessed.

Elijah, who has been termed "the grandest and most romantic character which Israel ever produced," is to many a Bible reader a prophet of such dignity and sternness of demeanor that one is surprised when St. James speaks of him as "a man of like passions with ourselves"—meaning, also, of like sympathies and hopes and loves and laudable ambitions—a man of the people, though by his vocation as a prophet a ruler and a guide.

"On Horeb's mount the prophet stood," and there he learned a lesson which he communicated to the world; so that not alone his nation, but all nations may learn that not in the earthquake, nor the fire, nor in the strong and mighty mind, but in "the still, small voice" rests forever the symbol of the mightiest power. The English speaking people as well as the Hebrew nation have learned the meaning of the great words "tendencies," "influence," "growth," "evolution," as the outcome of silent and mighty forces. The force of forces is the Christian's god. And never before, as in the Victorian age, has this knowledge of the power of silent forces been so fully shown or exemplified.

The women of the Mayflower under that influence became heroines in the dawn of the seventeenth century. Florence Nightingale, Dorothea Dix, Clara Barton and the whole vast company of nurses and philanthropic women—in times of war and times of peace—have been during Victoria's reign proving the working of an unseen but mighty influence on benevolent lines, which is more and more the fulfillment of prophecy. The women mentioned are but types. Their honored names awake a thousand memories and stir our souls by heroic associations. Women of Mayflower spirit as well as ancestry crowd the highest walks of American life to-day. Women with philanthropic spirit and increasing opportunities for being helpful to humanity in its sufferings and needs are prominent in both hemispheres. "Victoria rules over a vast number of such women, while a larger number who are not her subjects respect and honor her, realizing that she has helped rather than hindered the fulfillment of prophecy by her own career. Had Victoria been a "Bloody Mary" or a Catherine of Russia, Great Britain would not occupy the high place she does to-day. The long reign of this one peace-loving woman has afforded opportunity for both men and women in various lines to fulfil prophecy.

The studious may ponder over the pages of Grotius, Bishop Newton, Dr. Hammond, Le Clerc and many another of the writers who have essayed to explain the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, but not an expounder among them is able to satisfy every inquirer after the proofs which indicate that prophecy has become history. As it requires a poet's soul to comprehend a poet's utterance, so it requires a measure of prophetic ability to comprehend the grand utterances of those who, as St. Peter says, were "the holy men of God" who "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

St. Peter also spoke of the "holy women who trusted in God," and the names of Huldah and Anna the prophetess arise to mind as types of those who were equally "moved by the Holy Ghost," with the men prophets of their age, and whose successors in these days would be equally able to discern the merging of prophetic promises into historic realizations.

From early days as Sunday-school pupils we have all heard the expression "Four prophets the greater and twelve prophets the less." These, with Moses, Joshua and Elijah, constitute the nineteen prophets whom the artist Sargent has immortalized anew in his artistic representations. There on the Parnassus

